

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CARACA 04925 121800Z

46

ACTION SCSE-00

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 /011 W
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O P 121633Z MAY 75
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY QUITO IMMEDIATE
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8708
AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO PRIORITY
AMCONSUL SAO PAULO
AMEMBASSY BOGOTA IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL CALI

UNCLAS CARACAS 4925

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CDES, EC (RUSSIAN, LARRY)

SUBJECT: ALLEGED DEATH OF LARRY RUSSIAN

REF: QUITO 3226 (NOTAL)

1. AS REQUESTED REFTEL, EMBASSY MANAGED TO LOCATE VENEZUELAN HAM OPERATOR WHO PICKED UP MESSAGE FROM JOAO RENE DA SILVA CONCERNING CRASH IN BRAZIL. ACCORDING TO THE VENEZUELAN HAM OPERATOR, WHOSE NAME IS SERGIO DE AGOSTINO, DA SILVA RADIOED ON MAY 5 THAT A HELICOPTER CRASHED "NEAR THE BRAZILIAN FRONTIER," BUT DID NOT GIVE MORE PRECISE INFORMATION ON LOCATION OR TIME OF CRASH. DA SILVA REPORTED THAT THE SIX BRAZILIAN PASSENGERS AND THE U.S. PILOT, LARRY RUSSIAN, WERE ALL DEAD. HE SAID THAT HE WOULD INFORM BRAZILIAN AUTHORITIES OF ACCIDENT, BUT ASKED DE AGOSTINO INFORM A BETTY GRONER OF POTOMAC, MARYLAND, OF LARRY RUSSIAN'S DEATH. DA SILVA STATED THAT MISS GRONER'S NAME HAD BEEN FOUND AMONG PAPERS ON RUSSIAN'S BODY.

2. DA SILVA WAS NOT A REGULAR HAM OPERATOR AND SAID THE ONLY IDENTIFICATION HE COULD GIVE WAS A TAG ON HIS RADIO SET WHICH READ FCIA-7805-WTZ. DE AGOSTINO WAS UNABLE TO MAKE FURTHER CONTACT WITH DA SILVA, BUT HE CALLED A HAM OPERATOR IN VIRGINIA TO ASK WHETHER BETTY GRONER SHOULD BE INFORMED. THEY AGREED THAT, SINCE
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PAGE 02 CARACA 04925 121800Z

DA SILVA'S MESSAGE MAY HAVE BEEN A HOAX, IT WOULD BE BETTER TO INFORM THE FBI, WHICH VIRGINIA HAM OPERATOR SUBSEQUENTLY DID.

3. VENEZUELAN DAILY NEWSPAPER EL UNIVERSAL ON MAY 12 CARRIED AP STORY DATED BOGOTA ON A HELICOPTER CRASH WHICH SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN THE SAME AS THAT REPORTED BY HAM OPERATORS. ACCORDING TO AP, "SEVEN BRAZILIAN MILITARY OFFICERS" DIED IN A HELICOPTER CRASH ON MAY 2 IN EL COCUI, COLOMBIA, NEAR THE BORDER WITH BRAZIL AND VENEZUELA. REPORTEDLY, THE PURPOSE OF THE HELICOPTER FLIGHT WAS TO OBSERVE THIS ZONE, IN WHICH BRAZIL WAS CONSTRUCTING A ROADWAY ALONG THE FRONTIER. AP REPORT DID NOT MENTION THE PRESENCE OF ANY U.S. CITIZEN ON THE HELICOPTER.

4. ADDRESSEES MAY WISH TO REPEAT ANY PREVIOUS MESSAGES ON THIS SUBJECT TO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA.
SHLAUDEMAN

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To: SCS BRASILIA QUITO
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